

PEMBROKE'S SMITHY ON OLD ROUTE 3



By HELEN S. MELANSON

The old blacksmith shop on High street, Pembroke, did not stand beneath a spreading chestnut tree, as did the smithy's shop of Longfellow's much-famed poem, but it did boast of a towering elm whose boughs and branches lovingly embraced the old building, offering shade in the summertime and in the winter it stood straight and tall as if it were a sentinel on duty.

But it is not of the elm tree I write, for this old shop had another distinction. This building stood right at the Pembroke and Duxbury town line, but with a strip of land on the Duxbury side that went with the property. Now Mr. Harry Winslow was the blacksmith at this time, a man as upright and honest as Longfellow's smithy, but with a sense of dry humor and a strong vocabulary that was not recorded as one of the attributes of the smithy in the aforementioned poem. But he did work from morn 'till night mostly in his shop on the Pembroke side, and then again he might be found, a few steps away, working in that strip of land that was Duxbury.

Now at this time Route 3 went right up High Street, turning the curve where Archer's blueberry stand is now located, and continuing its leisurely way towards North Pembroke. Folks out for a Sunday drive drove slowly, enjoyed the pretty countryside, and stopped frequently at one of the numerous stands, along the way, for a duck sandwich and a piece of home-made custard pie, for which the stands along High Street were famous. The new Route 3, which made this part of High and Washington Streets a large semi-circle, was not put in until 1927.

One day when Mr. Winslow was

working outside his shop a car stopped. One of the gentlemen, on the front seat, leaned out of his window and inquired what town they were in. "Why, you are in Pembroke," replied Mr. Winslow. One of the women passengers, on the back seat, not hearing the answer called out, "What town did you say this is?" Mr. Winslow stepped over to her window and very politely informed her that she was in Duxbury. The man in front had a very puzzled expression. "I understood you to say that I was in Pembroke," he exclaimed. "Why, you are," answered our smithy. The driver of the car looked dumfounded and I expect he was secretly thinking that he had met up with the town eccentric, of which each town had a few. "Now look here," he expostulated, "what kind of a joke is this? Are we in Pembroke or are we in Duxbury?"

"Well, you see sir, you have stopped your car right at the town line," explained Mr. Winslow, pointing to the signpost. "You gentlemen are in Pembroke but the ladies are in Duxbury." Everyone began to laugh. A few days later the story of this encounter appeared in a Boston newspaper. One of the men was a reporter and he was greatly impressed by this example of dry Yankee wit.

On yet another occasion an auto pulled up to the shop door. "Can you fix my flat tire?" called out the driver. "Yes, I can," replied the smithy, "just as soon as I go to Duxbury for my tools." "Why I can't wait that long," said the owner of the deflated tire. "Oh, I'll be right back," came the cheery answer. The woeful driver watched Mr. Winslow set out, watched him walk a few feet, pick up a handful of tools, and then come back to the car. "Well, I'll be ———," was all he said.

Located to the left of the West Duxbury Methodist church until the smithy was torn down.